

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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R 301200Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4631
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1001

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, BU, GR
SUBJECT: BULGARIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS GREECE

REF: SOFIA 0978

1. SUMMARY: BULGARIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER MINCHEV
VISITED ATHENS TO INAUGURATE GREEK/BULGARIAN CONSULTATIONS
AT THAT LEVEL. BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE SMOOTH AND TRADE IS
INCREASING. TWO SIDES GENERALLY AGREED IN NON-SENSITIVE
INTERNATIONAL AREAS, BUT AVOIDED CYPRUS QUESTION. NO PROGRESS
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WAS MADE ON MULTILATERAL BALKAN COOPERATION. HIGH-RANKING
BCP OFFICIAL LILOV REPRESENTED BULGARIA AT GREEK COMMUNIST
PARTY CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. BULGARIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER NIKOLAY MINCHEV
VISITED ATHENS MAY 10-12 IN FIRST OF WHAT WILL BE SERIES
OF CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN GREEK AND BULGARIAN MINISTRIES

OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. MINCHEV MET WITH GREEK MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS GEORGE RALLIS, STATE SECRETARY ANDREAS ZAIMIS, AND GREEK MFA GENERAL DIRECTOR FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS IOANIS DZUNIS. BULGARIAN AMBASSADOR LYUBOMIR POPOV AND GREEK AMBASSADOR ALEXIS STEPHANOU ALSO SAT IN ON TALKS. BULGARIAN PRESS SAID TOPICS WERE BILATERAL RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL QUESTIONS.

3. GREEK AMBASSADOR STEPHANOU BRIEFED NATO AMBASSADORS ON MINCHEV TALKS DURING MAY 18 NATO AMBASSADORS MEETING HERE. STEPHANOU SAID TWO SIDES FOUND VIRTUALLY NO MAJOR BILATERAL PROBLEMS, THERE BEING NO MINORITY OR TERRITORIAL CLAIM OR PROBLEMS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. ECONOMIC MIXED COMMISSION WILL MEET IN ATHENS STARTING MAY 31. TWO-WAY TRADE WAS \$86 MILLION LAST YEAR AND TARGET IS \$175 MILLION FOR 1978. GREEKS WILL MOUNT TRADE SHOW IN SOFIA STARTING JUNE 21. BULGARIANS WISH MORE LIBERAL VISA POLICY BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES BUT GREEKS RESIST THIS FOR SECURITY REASONS EXCEPT FOR MULTIPLE TRIP DIPLOMATIC VISAS. MINCHEV RENEWED PREVIOUS BULGARIAN REQUEST FOR MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF UNIVERSITY DIPLOMAS. GREEK SIDE EXPLAINED THAT THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE GREEK UNIVERSITIES ARE AUTONOMOUS, THUS REMOVING THIS QUESTION FROM GOVERNMENT JURISDICTION IN ITS DEALING WITH ALL COUNTRIES.

4. IN AREA OF INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, MINCHEV AND GREEK
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SIDE AGREED THAT AFRICAN BORDERS ARE FAR FROM FROM IDEAL, BUT THAT STATUS QUO SHOULD BE MAINTAINED. IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 1967 BORDERS SHOULD BE RETURNED TO AND GUARANTEES PROVIDED TO ALL PARTICIPANTS, INCLUDING ISRAEL. BOTH SIDES SUPPORTED HOLDING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, WITH PLO PARTICIPATION. BULGARIANS SUPPORTED NON-ALIGNMENT AS A DESIRABLE FOREIGN POLICY POSTURE, SO LONG AS NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES SUPPORTED THE STRUGGLE FOR "LIQUIDATION OF COLONIALISM." HELSINKI CSCE PRINCIPLES WERE REAFFIRMED. BULGARIANS SAW THE UN SSOD PRIMARILY AS CONSTRUCTIVE STEP TOWARD A WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE.

5. BALKAN RELATIONS WERE DISCUSSED. MINCHEV CHARACTERIZED BULGARIA'S RELATIONS WITH TURKEY AND ROMANIA AS "VERY GOOD." (NOTE: BULGARIANS HAD TOLD ECEVIT THAT THEY HAD "SMALL PROBLEM" WITH ROMANIA (PARA 8, REFTEL).) MINCHEV PROVIDED GREEKS BRIEF RUNDOWN ON ECEVIT'S VISIT TO BULGARIA, INCLUDING FACT THAT BULGARIA HAD NOT SUPPORTED TURKEY'S POSITION ON CYPRUS, DESIRING GOOD BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH BOTH COUNTRIES, NOT SIDING WITH ONE AGAINST THE OTHER. (NOTE: THIS POINT WAS OMITTED FROM STEPHANOU'S ACCOUNT TO NATO AMBASSADORS, AND GIVEN

SEPARATELY TO AMBASSADOR.) MINCHEV SAID THAT ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH YUGOSLAVIA WERE GOOD AND NOTED THAT TWO COUNTRIES HAD CONTACTS ON MANY LEVELS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE MACEDONIAN QUESTION REMAINED SORE POINT BETWEEN TWO AND NOTED THAT HIS VISIT TO BELGRADE IN FEBRUARY HAD BROUGHT NO AGREEMENT. AS BULGARIANS HAD DONE WITH ECEVIT, MINCHEV REITERATED TO GREEKS LONG-STANDING BULGARIAN PREFERENCE FOR BILATERAL AS OPPOSED TO MULTILATERAL BALKAN COOPERATION.

6. POLITBURO MEMBER AND SECRETARY ALEKSANDUR LILOV VISITED GREECE MAY 12-22 TO REPRESENT THE BULGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (BCP) AT THE MAY CONGRESS OF THE GREEK COMMUNIST PARTY (GCP). (COMMENT: LILOV IS A VERY HIGH-CONFIDENTIAL

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RANKING REPRESENTATIVE TO SEND TO A CONFERENCE OF A NON-RULING CP. END COMMENT.) STEPHANOU COMMENTED THAT THE TWO PARTIES WERE CLOSE AND THAT THE VERY ORTHODOX GCP TOOK SAME IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONS AS BCP ON MOST ISSUES. HE ADDED THAT LILOV HAD ALSO PAID VISIT TO MT. ATHOS MONASTERIES MAY 13-14 AND THAT THERE WERE NEW BULGARIAN MONKS THERE (AS WELL AS A NEW SOVIET CHIEF MONK).
GARTHOFF

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